

Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the specification as set out below based on the "Substitute Sections - Clean Copy" of the Specification submitted with the Amendment mailed October 1, 2002:

Please replace the fourth full paragraph of Page 4 of the Substitute Sections - Clean Copy with the following amended paragraph:

Figure 3 is a side view [cross-sectional] view of a hub used in the assembly of **Figure 1**.

Please replace the sixth full paragraph of Page 4 of the Substitute Sections - Clean Copy, with the following amended paragraph:

Figures 5 and 5A [is] are [partial] cross-sectional views of the blunting apparatus [of] assembly of **Figure 1** in the non-blunting and blunting positions, respectively.

Please replace the seventh full paragraph on Page 4 of the Substitute Sections - Clean Copy, with the following amended paragraph:

Figure 6 is a [partial longitudinal] cross-sectional view of the needle component of the assembly shown in **Figures 1-3** having the needle blunting apparatus of the invention in its advanced "blunting" position.

Please replace the fourth full paragraph on Page 5 of the Substitute Sections - Clean Copy, with the following amended paragraph:

Assembly 10 also includes housing 67 coupled to needle blunting assembly 25. At the proximal end of housing 67, member 90 is coupled thereto. Member 90 has a lower cylindrical portion 91 that has an outside diameter that is smaller than the inner diameter of housing 67. Member 90 has a hollow lumen therethrough allowing porous member 80 to be positioned within member 90. Member 90 is at least partially transparent and the hollow lumen therethrough is in communication with the blunting apparatus 25. The lower cylindrical portion 91 and/or housing 67 may define or serve [serves] as a flash chamber.

Please replace the first and second full paragraphs on page 6 of the Substitute

Sections - Clean Copy, with the following amended paragraphs:

Porous member 80 may be comprised of materials such as cotton high-density polyethylene (HDPE) or ultra-high-molecular-weight polyethylene (UHMWPE). Elongated rigid needle 18 is formed of material such as stainless steel hypotubing and has a beveled or otherwise sharpened distal tip 40. As shown, for example, in **Figures 2 and 4**, a hollow bore 22 extends longitudinally through needle 18. A transparent flash chamber housing [91] 67 is coupled to the proximal end of the elongated rigid needle 18. A hollow flash chamber bore 92 extends longitudinally through the flash chamber 67 and/or 91. Such longitudinal flash chamber bore 92 has a substantially cylindrical distal inner wall of substantially continuous diameter and enlarged cylindrical proximal inner wall. Longitudinal bore 92 of flash chamber 67 and/or 91 is continuous with and connected to the hollow bore 22 of needle 18 as shown in **Figure 4** wherein these elements coaxially nestle together.

Figure 3 shows a hub 37 having a hollow hub bore 38 to enable the hub to be removably coupled to housing 67. The hub 37 is connected to introducer sheath 16 which includes cannula 30 having a hollow lumen 35. The hollow hub bore 38 extends longitudinally through the hub 37. The hub bore 38 has a substantially cylindrical proximal inner wall and a narrowed or tapered distal inner wall. The hub 37 is capable of receiving needle 18 such that needle 18 is coaxially nestled within sheath 16. The hub 37 has exterior rim 39 to engage a longitudinal portion 77 of the securing member 75 of the blunting apparatus (See Figures 5 and 5A).

Please replace the second full paragraph on page 7 of the Substitute Sections -

Clean Copy, with the following amended paragraph:

Given the above description, the flow of bodily fluids through assembly 10 may occur generally in the follow fashion. Needle 18 pierces the skin of a patient and enters a vessel such as a blood vessel. Blood or other bodily fluids enters the hollow cavity of needle 18 and moves generally in the direction of blunting member 65. Thereafter, the bodily fluid enters flash chamber bore 92 [91]. Flash chamber bore 92 [91] generally serves the purpose of containing bodily fluids. As the flash chamber [37] fills with bodily fluid, the bodily fluid may contact porous member 80. While pressure builds in assembly 10, the bodily fluid follows a tortuous path through the pores or unobstructed paths in porous member 80. Porous member 80 prevents bodily fluid from exiting porous member 80 for a certain time period by absorbing this fluid. For example, porous member 80 may prevent bodily fluids from escaping up to thirty seconds after flash chamber bore 92 [91] is completely filled.

Please replace the first and second full paragraphs on page 8 of the Substitute

Section - Clean Copy, with the following amended paragraphs:

It will be appreciated from **Figures 1 and 2** that the introducer 15, the needle component 18, and the blunting apparatus 25 are initially disposed in a coaxially nested arrangement wherein needle 18 extends coaxially through the lumen 35 of cannula 30. As noted above, blunting member 65 extends through a portion of the bore 22 of needle 18 such that the blunt distal tip 100 of blunting member 65 is located within the bore 22 of needle 18 a spaced distance $[X] X_1$, proximal to its sharpened distal tip [100] 40. Thereafter, pushing blunting assembly 25 in the direction of needle 18 will cause the blunting assembly 25 to be advanced in the distal direction as shown in **Figures 5A and 6**, while pulling blunting assembly 25 away from needle 18 will cause the blunting assembly 25 to be retracted in the proximal direction as shown in **Figure 5**. It will be appreciated that, when the blunting apparatus 25 is in its proximally retracted "non-blunting" position that blunt distal tip 100 resides within lumen 22 of the elongated rigid needle 18, a spaced distance X_1 from the distal tip [100] 40 thereof. However, when the blunting apparatus 25 is moved to its distally advanced "blunting" position, the blunt distal tip 100 of the tubular member 65 will extend out of and beyond the sharp distal tip [100] 40 of the elongate rigid needle 18 by a distance X_2 (see **Figure 6**). Such protrusion of the blunt distal tip 100 of the tubular member 65 beyond the sharpened distal tip [100] 40 of the elongated rigid needle 18 essentially prevents the sharpened distal tip [100] 40 of the elongate rigid needle from causing trauma to, or puncturing, skin, or other tissue.

It will be appreciated that engagement member 77 of the blunting apparatus 25 may be formed or configured in various different ways, without departing from its intended functions, including the function of facilitating movement of the blunting apparatus 25 between its proximally retracted "non-blunting" position as shown in **Figure 5**, and its distally extended "blunting" position as shown in **Figures 5A and 6**.